

POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

(Committee Rooms 1/2 - Port Talbot Civic Centre)

Members Present:

7 March 2018

Chairperson: Councillor A.N.Woolcock

Vice Chairperson: Councillor S.Rahaman

Councillors: C.Edwards, S.E.Freeguard, M.Harvey,
S.K.Hunt, H.N.James, A.Llewelyn, S.Miller,
L.M.Purcell, S.M.Penry, J.Warman and
S.Paddison

Officers In Attendance K.Jones, D.Rees, A. Hinder and C.Davies

Cabinet Invitees: Councillors R.G.Jones, C.Clement-Williams and
D.Jones

1. **MINUTES OF THE POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE THAT WAS HELD ON 24TH JANUARY 2018**

The Committee noted the minutes.

2. **SCRUTINY FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2017/18.**

The committee noted the Forward Work Programme.

Officers highlighted that there will be a workshop session planned for the beginning of the next civic year to populate the Scrutiny Forward Work Programme for 2018/19.

3. **PRE-SCRUTINY**

The Committee chose to scrutinise the following Cabinet Board items:

Cabinet Board Proposals

3.1 Quarterly Performance Management Data 2017/2018 – Quarter 3 Performance (1st April – 31st December 2018)

Members received the quarter 3 performance management data for the period 1st April 2017 to 31st December 2017 for Chief Executive's and Finance and Corporate Services Directorates and the performance management data for the same period for services that are within the remit of the other four Cabinet Boards.

Officers clarified that the overview report had been prepared for the Cabinet Board to exercise a corporate oversight of performance as well as providing the Scrutiny Committee with information about performance within the two directorates within the purview of this committee.

Members commented that they found it useful to also to be able to enquire about the broader suite of indicators but noted that the relevant officers may not be present to address queries. It was agreed that the future focus of performance scrutiny could be explored in the committee development session mentioned earlier in the meeting.

Officers highlighted that the performance indicator on the percentage of webpages available in Welsh was showing 100% for Quarter 3. It was noted that, that data is the latest available data as of at the 30th June 2017 as a new content management system (Umbraco) had been launched in July. Members were advised that the installation of the system had caused glitches which had affected the ability to provide up to date information.

Members highlighted that they had posted links to Facebook of the Welsh Neath Port Talbot Internet pages, however the links were showing the English pages and queried whether the issues with the pilot of Umbraco was causing this error. Officers highlighted that this may be the case, however would check and get back to the Member.

Members asked what was meant by Broadly Compliant which was detailed in bullet point 1 under Public Protection. Officers highlighted that they would circulate a response to the question outside of the meeting as the information was not to hand.

Adult services PI/7 Members asked why there was such a drop in the number of care and support plans that were reviewed during the year, from 2,004 in 2016/17 to 973 Quarter 3 2017/18. Officers noted the question and highlighted that they would get a response from the relevant officer.

Members asked why the performance indicator on the number of jobs created had dropped significantly from 184 in 2015/16 to 64 in Quarter 3, 2017/18. Officers highlighted that the reason for the discrepancy is that the 184 jobs refers to a whole year and the 64 refers to three quarters of a year. It was noted that a lot of the outputs do not materialise through the system until the last quarter as there is a delay or back-log in the processing of the number of jobs created, which is usually then remedied in the last quarter or at the end of the year. Therefore it was highlighted that it would be best to compare in Quarter 4 to get a true comparison, when all the outputs are finalised.

Members commended the increase in number of leisure centre visits

Members asked whether sickness levels have an effect with the number of exclusions within education. Officers highlighted to members that this could be discussed in their Forward Work Programme Workshop Session.

Members highlighted that under the Homelessness section it was noted that the cases that progress to a final section 75 duty are low, it was asked how many was low. Officers highlighted that in the performance indicator it is 65, however will check with the relevant officer.

Members raised concern on the downsizing of the workforce. Officers explained why the performance reports are so important in allowing Members to monitor these concerns. It was noted that the budget confirmed where savings need to be made within the Council. It was noted that the revised corporate plan would be coming before Members which would allow them to weigh up the impacts on service priorities and service delivery.

Members raised concern on the reporting of the performance management data for services that are within the remit of the other four Cabinet Boards and asked whether it could be discussed in Democratic Services Committee. Officers

highlighted that it would not need discussion in Democratic Services Committee as the committee itself can decide how to scrutinise their own items and control their own agenda.

Members asked why there had been a decrease in permanent exclusions from secondary schools, however an increase in permanent exclusions in primary schools. Officers confirmed that they would check with the relevant officer and get back to Members outside of the meeting.

Members asked for clarification around the number of children excluded on a permanent basis and what were the implications for staff monitoring these caseloads. Officers confirmed that they would check with the relevant officer and get back to Members outside of the meeting.

Following scrutiny, it was agreed that the report be noted.

3.2 Consultation – Code of Practice for Welsh Language Standards (No.1) regulations

Members were asked to consider the Council's response to the consultation being undertaken by the Welsh Language Commissioner's on her draft Code of Practice for the Welsh Language Standards.

Members were also updated on the outcome of further dialogue that had taken place between officers and representatives of the Welsh Language Commissioner concerning the 9 standards still subject of Challenge.

Officers highlighted that a positive meeting had taken place with the Welsh Commissioner. There appeared to be better understanding on the budget constraints and language barriers that the Council faces, and more realism as to what the Council can do to meet the standards.

Members supported the report and the proposed response to the Commissioner. Member commented that a document of that size that the Commissioner proposed to issue could put barriers up for people. A far more simplified version was considered essential to promote engagement with the aims of the Welsh Language Standards.

Following scrutiny, the Committee was supportive of the proposal to be considered by the Cabinet Board.

3.3 Alternative Service Delivery Proposals for Port Talbot Civic Centre Council Tax Enquiries

Members were updated on an alternative service delivery arrangement for dealing with Council Tax enquiries at Port Talbot Civic Centre.

Members asked that the word Manning be changed to Staffing in the circulated document.

Members asked for the Equality Impact screening to be circulated to the committee members as it was not included in the documents.

Members were concerned for members of the public that may have hearing difficulties. Officers confirmed that the one stop shop could help out in those instances.

It was noted that there is a National Deaf Telephone Service that could be considered with the new telephony system that is being introduced.

The Cabinet Member commended the officers on the work that they had achieved.

Following scrutiny, the Committee was supportive of the proposal to be considered by the Cabinet Board

3.4 Treasury Management Monitoring 2017/18

Members were informed that there was not a great deal in change in the treasury Management report.

It was noted that in previous reports there would be a table showing long term investments i.e. maturing in more than 12 months' time. However as those investments will now be maturing within the next 12 months they have been removed.

Following scrutiny, it was agreed that the report be noted.

CHAIRPERSON